

I have read Sorenson's comments on their website regarding their making of DVC-1000 and VP-100. I disagree with their interpretation of the idea of openness. Personally, I consider their rationale a little illogical and self-serving.

Hearing people can purchase telephones or receive telephones as gifts without any concerns as to whether it will work with a given telecommunications provider. There are no phones that only work with a Qwest dial tone or a AT&T dial tone or a MCI dial tone. All phones work with all telecommunications providers. If the focus of TRS/VRS service is to provide functional equivalence to services available to hearing, then I firmly believe that all VRS equipment should be open to all VRS providers. VRS providers should compete on the merits of their VRS service, not their VRS equipment. If we look at telecommunications providers, as far as I have experienced it as a regular consumer, if they produce a special phone that has many features, it will still work with other local or long distance companies. They compete by providing telecommunications services that will benefit me as the consumer and make me want to use their service.

Several in my area have Sorenson phones, but they have longer answer times and restricted access to Sorenson VRS. I (and others) have a D-Link with faster answer times and unrestricted access to any VRS provider (even Sorenson if I wanted to). When I compare Sorenson to D-Link, I see two different perspectives. With Sorenson, I feel like I am being patted on the head and told that they know better than me so just trust us to give you whatever you need for VRS service and here is a bribe of a fancier videophone to keep you happy. With D-Link, I feel like the VRS providers say, "We are here to serve you. We hope you like our service. We are working hard to improve our service and meet your communication needs." With the D-Link, I feel like I am treated as an intelligent human being instead of a member of a community that the company can exploit for their financial gain.

If Sorenson is so wonderful, let them compete like the other VRS providers ... fairly on the merits of their VRS services, not their equipment. That is what hearing have come to expect in the telecommunications field with regular telephone service. The FCC just mandated that with cell phones to allow people to transfer phone numbers from vendor to vendor. Let that also be true for deaf people with VRS.